



Getting lean, going green at the gym

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Getting lean, going green at the gym



“Living roofs” provide natural insulation for gym interiors.

Pollution and climate change both have negative effects on our environment and health. It’s ironic, then, that the very activities we undertake to better ourselves from inside out could possibly create even more health hazards in the form of increased pollution.

The good news is that exercisers at gyms in the U.S. and beyond are working up more than a sweat – they’re also taking a bite out of the gyms’ actual energy use.

In Hong Kong, Australia, the United States and Europe, sustainable gyms are opening, using generators connected to exercise bikes and treadmills to power themselves and harnessing energy from members’ workouts.

Green Fitness Studio in Brooklyn, New York, and Green Microgym in Portland, Oregon, both opened since 2010, are among this movement. New York-based Equinox, a boutique fitness chain with locations in seven states and Washington, D.C., has also taken steps at its clubs to reduce water use and use eco-friendly products where possible.

Green Microgym owner Adam Boesel says the concept is popular with its members. “Not only are you doing the one thing that can reduce your risk

of death by disease by 50 percent, but your effort is also contributing to making the world a better place,” Boesel says. “Also, our energy-saving culture is based on member control of their environment (fans, TVs, lights, etc.), making for a far more personalized member experience.”

The concept is indicative of the Bushwick neighborhood in Brooklyn, a community largely comprising artists and creative individuals who tend to embrace the concept of sustainability. It only makes sense that there’s a fitness facility embracing that healthy lifestyle.

From the minute you rack your bicycle at Green Fitness Studio until your post-workout shower, you’re part of the solution, promoting the three Rs of green living – reduce, recycle and reuse.

Green Fitness Studio’s bike rack was made from an old bike taken out of the landfill in Brooklyn, and all of the equipment is remanufactured. However, the steel was blasted and powder coated in Bushwick (zero VOCs, or volatile organic compounds).

Aside from the gym’s refurbished treadmills, Green Fitness’ other equipment is entirely self-powered.

Other green initiatives include:

- Sustainable flooring including recycled rubber in group fitness studios and workout areas
- A 2,000-square-foot living roof that acts as natural insulation and helps to lower heating and air-conditioning costs
- Bathrooms featuring dual-flush toilets and low-flow faucets and showerheads
- Heat-mirrored glass in the atrium to reduce cooling and heating costs; solar panels and repurposed windows taken from an old Manhattan hospital
- Locally sourced organic and sustainable foods for the gym’s juice bar



Flooring made from recycled rubber is becoming more common in gym workout areas.

One man's trash is another man's house



Earthships can be rented for up to a week in Taos, New Mexico.

It all started in 1969, before the advent of recycling. Inspired by TV news stories about the problem of trash and the lack of affordable housing in Taos, New Mexico, architect-school graduate Michael Reynolds created a "can brick" out of discarded steel and tin cans. Ten empty cans, four flat and six unflattened, were wired together to make a building block. Reynolds obtained a patent for these blocks in 1973.



A vegetable garden grows inside an Earthship near Taos.

The initial passive-solar homes – which would eventually be christened "Earthships" – consisted of discarded steel or tin beer cans. The cans were used as free units of space that helped form light, but strong, concrete walls. Although the homes were far from sophisticated, they quickly garnered media attention.

Over the next decade, designs evolved to incorporate thermal mass, passive solar and natural ventilation. Today's houses (made of at least 50 percent recycled materials) are so strong that no foundation is required. Solar glazing along the entire front of the structure allows the sun to heat the floors and the walls providing comfortable, stable temperatures inside without using fossil fuels or wood. Windows and skylights provide a natural cooling system.

Want to experience life in an Earthship? At Earthship Biotecture in Taos, visitors can stay in an Earthship for up to a week. Those ready to set up permanent residence in an Earthship can purchase one in the Taos area.

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Original and repurposed materials, beautifully intertwined

The artwork in this issue of *Unity* incorporates natural and recycled materials that are reshaped into elements artistically different from their original state.

Harold D. Davis

During childhood, Harold Davis lived with his extended family on a farm in rural South Carolina, where he learned to make old things into new. "I helped my grandmother sew quilts from old scraps of material and I learned that the elders made replacement parts for farming machinery from old vehicles," Davis recalls. "It was by watching them that I learned the art of repurposing objects."



"Face" by Harold Davis

At an early age, Davis used fireplace charcoal to create some of his first sketches. Later, a high school mentor influenced him to continue his artwork and study designing, painting and sculpting at the Traphagen School of Fashion and Design in New York. He also studied in Paris, France.

Davis has used driftwood from the Long Island Sound that surfaced following the arrival of Hurricane Sandy. "The artwork I create exemplifies using those existing materials, reshaped and reconfigured by nature to create something completely different," says Davis.

His piece, "Face," is a facial distortion using a driftwood piece of roofing shingle. The face is looking out of an old barn and represents the study of various wood grains.



"Unwavering Glory" by Harold Davis

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"Unwavering Glory" was also created from driftwood instead of canvas. The wood is painted with acrylic and oil and the flag was created using pieces and bends of wood. "The driftwood exemplifies the timelessness of Old Glory throughout its struggles to preserve liberty and freedom for all," says Davis.

The shapes, colors and woodgrains of "Fish" are positioned much like a puzzle. Davis says he sometimes cuts pieces of wood to fit a collage and achieve a cubist depth to his work.

His work is displayed in universities, theaters, libraries and shops. Several of his paintings are part of private collections throughout the U.S. and France.



"Fish" by Harold Davis

Sandhi Schimmel Gold

Sandhi Schimmel Gold was born in the Bronx, New York, to WWII-era Hungarian refugees who shaped her as an artist. Gold's mother, an artist, taught her to mix paints at an early age. Her father was a leather goods designer who taught her designing and pattern making. Although Gold studied art extensively in college, she received her bachelor of arts in psychology and film from Arizona State University.

Gold recalls stumbling upon her paper mosaic technique while working as a portrait and mosaic artist. "I had a eureka moment when I realized I could utilize paper instead of glass or tile to create a mosaic effect." The results is a textured look and feel that is created from thousands of pieces of upcycled junk mail.

What began as a simple drawing ended up being a woman's face in "Heaven Can Wait." Her face of beige tones shows prominently against a colorful, active background of upcycled junk mail.



"Heaven Can Wait" by Sandhi Schimmel Gold

The portrait of Rosa Parks in “The Wheels on the Bus” illustrates her act of protest against the backdrop of Old Glory. Gold says the spiraled stripes represent the proverbial wheels on the bus, and that even though Parks is behind silver bars, she cannot be held back.



“The Wheels on the Bus” by Sandhi Schimmel Gold

“Forget Me Not” is one of Gold’s improvisational works creating an abstract garden with movement and many layers of paper embellished with paint.



“Forget Me Not” by Sandhi Schimmel Gold

Gold’s work has appeared in solo gallery and museum group shows throughout the United States.

Angela Haseltine Pozzi

Angela Haseltine Pozzi was raised by two artists and was given a space to create things out of anything she could get her hands on.

After teaching art for many years, Pozzi began creating ocean-themed sculptures with recycled items from thrift stores. Following the death of her husband, she went to the ocean for solace and healing and realized that the ocean needed healing, too. From that realization, Pozzi started a nonprofit called The Washed Ashore Project. With the help of volunteers, Pozzi began cleaning beaches and creating sculptures in the forms of animals threatened by marine debris.

All of Pozzi’s works are created by hundreds of hands, including those of children and senior citizens.

Pozzi says she wants to show the beauty of the way an octopus moves with each arm engaged and



“Octavia the Octopus” by Angela Haseltine Pozzi

the skirt billowing as if under water, in “Octavia the Octopus.” She also wants to raise awareness that the large items used at the bottom of this piece should not be ocean debris. Pozzi’s “Bella the Angelfish on a Coral Reef” is made with toys, tires, plastic fishing buoys, household objects and bottles of water that washed ashore daily.



“Bella the Angelfish on a Coral Reef” by Angela Haseltine Pozzi

The structured angle of the leaping fish, the splashing water, and the colors and patterns of blues in “Flash Martin” – consisting of water bottles, and energy drink and beer cans – is Pozzi’s attempt to depict a marlin’s ability to leap high into the air and swim at great speeds.

Pozzi’s organization works with the United Nations’ Ocean Conference and the U.S. State Department to educate the public, and to enhance discussions with world leaders and scientists about ocean and water pollution.



“Flash Martin” by Angela Haseltine Pozzi

Hens for hire? Yes, there's a market for them

What happens when a farm-raised woman, her “city-boy” husband and their four children go into business for themselves? They turn their 10-acre “gentleman’s farm” into an enterprise that’s really taken off.

Actually, Leslie and Mark Suitor’s business, Rent-A-Chicken, is part of the sharing economy that enables people to rent out their homes, cars and other things with the help of apps and websites dedicated to such exchanges. Then there are businesses like Rent-A-Chicken (<http://rent-a-chicken.net>), which operate on a more conventional scale – that of business owners buying goods and renting them to others. That’s primarily what the Suitors do in Traverse City, Michigan. Similar businesses are located in other states, including Maryland, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

The Suitors rent such breeds as Ameraucanas, Buff Orpingtons and Black Australorps, and have experimented with Silver Laced Wyandottes, Light Brahmas, Delawares and some mixed breeds.

“We raise all our girls ourselves, whether from chicks hatched on the farm or purchased from hatcheries,” says Leslie Suitor.

Launched in 2009, Rent-A-Chicken’s clientele has evolved.



Hens are ready for spring delivery to Rent-A-Chicken clients.

“When we first started our business, our typical clients were young families with children eager to teach their kids the joys and responsibilities of raising their own food,” Suitor recalls. “For the past few years we have seen a marked increase in affluent/retired people who are delighted with the idea of the bucolic lifestyle. Often, keeping hens is seen as a status symbol.”



“The girls” gather to enjoy a treat. Photos by Jim Symons

Suitor estimates that “at least half of our clients are repeat customers and about a quarter buy their girls outright. Our repeat clients have their girls marked when we take them back in the fall so they can have their same girls again next summer.”

Just as Rent-A-Chicken’s clientele has broadened, so has the company’s reach.

“We have started licensing our name to other farmers,” says Suitor. “We now have suppliers in most of Lower Michigan and all of Eastern Colorado.”

Training and support are huge components of the Suitors’ business.

In the summertime, the Suitors deliver two egg-producing hens, a coop and feeding materials to a client’s backyard and set up the coop. They return in the fall to gather the hens and the equipment. And they’re always available to answer a client’s queries about this truly organic pursuit.

“We provide a full tutorial and question/answer upon delivery of the girls in the spring. We are also on call all summer in case any question should arise,” Suitor says. “No question is ever trivial.”

Leslie Suitor enjoys educating prospective customers about their beloved “girls” and addressing inaccurate perceptions about them.

“Some people may have a misconception that chickens are ‘farm’ animals that only belong on a farm,” says Suitor. “Hens are loving, inquisitive, gentle birds that are remarkably easy to care for. They are far less noisy than even cats and dogs and deserve a chance to be appreciated by people everywhere.”

The new kitchen essential? 'Green' attire



Runway models have been sporting eco-friendly versions of haute couture for years. But there's no reason for the catwalk queens to have all the fun, as evidenced by the growing availability of organic/sustainable attire crafted for cooks in kitchens large and small.

Typically, these items are made of organic cotton, bamboo or hemp. Organic cotton is grown without the use of pesticides and insecticides. Bamboo is a fast-growing grass that doesn't need help from pesticides or insecticides. And hemp, like bamboo, doesn't need help from toxic herbicides.

Not surprisingly, the internet is an ideal source of "green" kitchen garb.

At etsy.com, for example, there's an array of aprons, dishtowels and mitts constructed of linen and cotton. The items are among Etsy's extensive offering of sustainable home furnishings and décor.

For professional chefs and retail/commercial kitchen staffers, the sustainable clothing trend is just as prevalent. Chefwear, which sells a full line of hospitality uniforms, offers an earth-friendly



collection of clothing at chefwear.com that coincides with the explosive increase in the number of organic appetizers, meals and drinks on foodservice menus across the country.

Eco-friendly garb and accessories are the height of culinary chic for those who feed the masses in cafeterias and restaurants, or smaller gatherings at home.

One man's trash is another man's house



Earthships consist of at least 50 percent recycled materials.

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Critics have noted that Earthships are far from perfect. But as one stated, "earthships, for all their faults, are a great place to start and find some really wonderful ideas" for incorporating good passive-design techniques.

The sustainable-housing movement that Reynolds help to cultivate 50 years ago has led to the creation of the Earthship Biotechture Academy (which Reynolds founded) that offers training in Earthship design principles, construction methods and philosophy. Earthship builders, electricians, plumbers and plant specialists lead classes, labs, tours and hands-on construction techniques. More than 1,400 students around the world have completed the six-week sessions in Taos. The 2019 spring sessions start April 1.

The academy partners with Western Colorado University's master's in environmental management program. Academy participants can also earn credits that can be applied to their bachelor's degrees at universities all over the globe.

For more information, visit earthshipglobal.com.



Bottles are a big component of the Earthships' walls.

Earthship design principles

- **Building with natural and repurposed materials.** Old tires, cans, bottles and adobe mud are among the elements used.
- **Thermal / solar heating and cooling.** The sun enters through the glass and heats the floors and walls. In the evening, heat is naturally released into the space. Cooling is enhanced with natural ventilation through buried cooling tubes.
- **Solar and wind electricity.** Each building has its own renewable "power plant" with photovoltaic panels, batteries, a charge controller and inverter. Some are also equipped with small windmills.
- **Water harvesting.** Earthships collect water from rain and snow melt on the roofs. Stored in cisterns, the water feeds a pump-and-filter system that cleans and sends it to a solar hot water heater and a pressure tank.
- **Contained sewage treatment.** "Gray" water flows to interior botanical cells, where plants use and treat the water until it's clean enough to be collected in a well and pumped to a toilet tank for flushing.
- **Food production.** Growing organic food in the home is the newest design principle.

On the cover: "Living roofs" provide space for workouts as well as natural insulation for the gym's interior. Published six times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitality.com. ©2019 Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. Produced by Content Spectrum.

